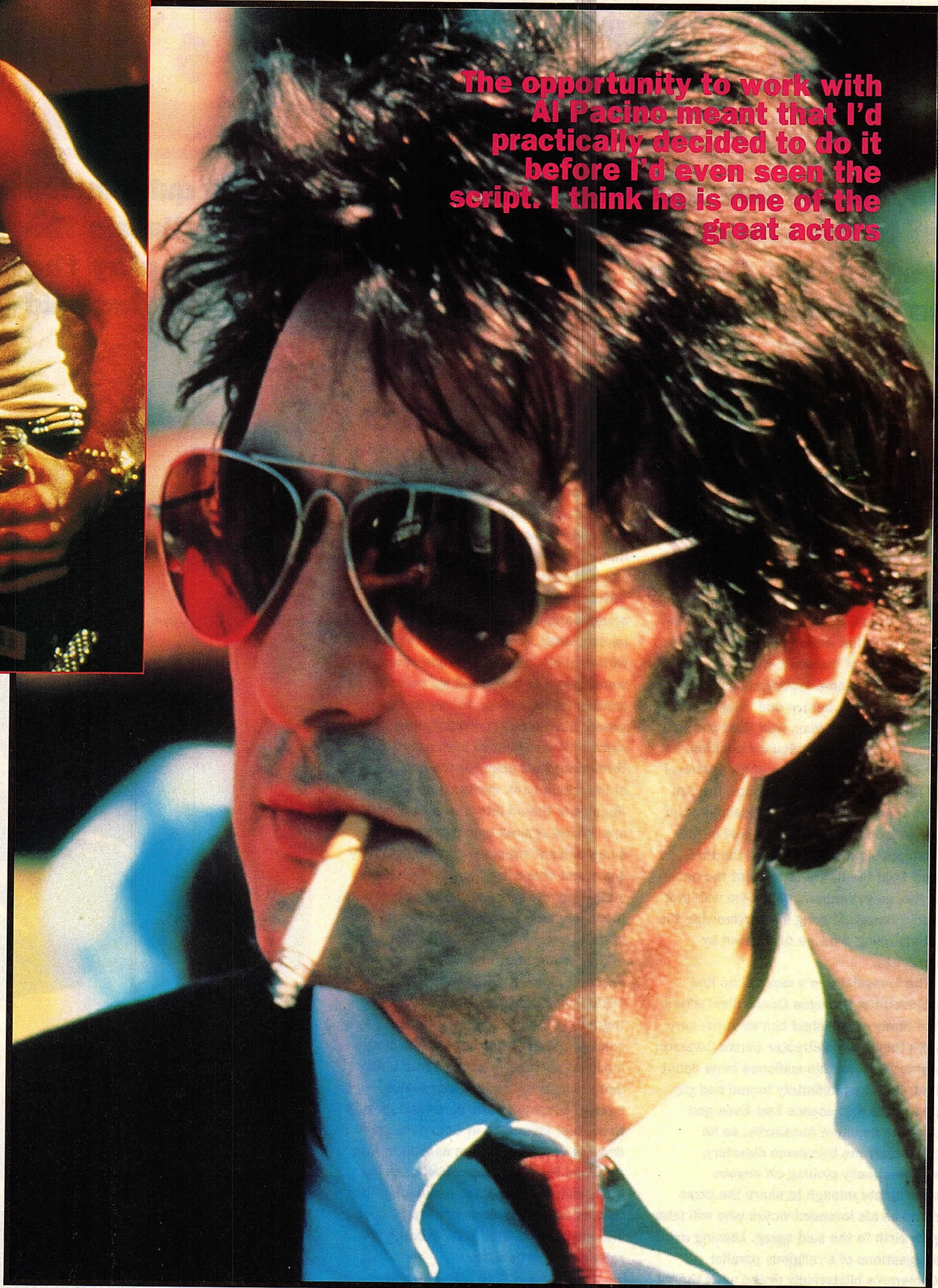




The opportunity to work with Al Pacino meant that I'd practically decided to do it before I'd even seen the script. I think he is one of the great actors



THE TERMINATOR

Back in the dark ages when Arnie's star status didn't quite match up to the size of his biceps he made this month's Classic *The Terminator*. Turning down the good guy part to play the unstoppable murdering man-machine he took a gamble that paid off, the rest, as they say, is history.

One of the first and still the best of the cyborg-as-kill-machine films, *The Terminator* propelled an Austrian ex-Mr Universe to superstardom. If you don't know his name, then welcome back from Mars, but for those of you who've just stepped from your capsule, he is of course Arnold Schwarzenegger. It can be safely said that Arnie has made it BIG in every sense of the word. He's a household name now, a name synonymous with supermen, both heroes and villains. Films like *The Running Man*, *Red Heat* and *Total Recall* have consolidated his position, but they were all in the wake of his portrayal of *Terminator's* rock hard robot. Big Arn took the risky decision of passing up the heroic lead role to take the part of the unstoppable man-machine of the title, sent from the future to prevent the arrival of the, as yet unborn, child who will later lead a renegade gang in overthrowing the robots ruling a future dominated by machines.

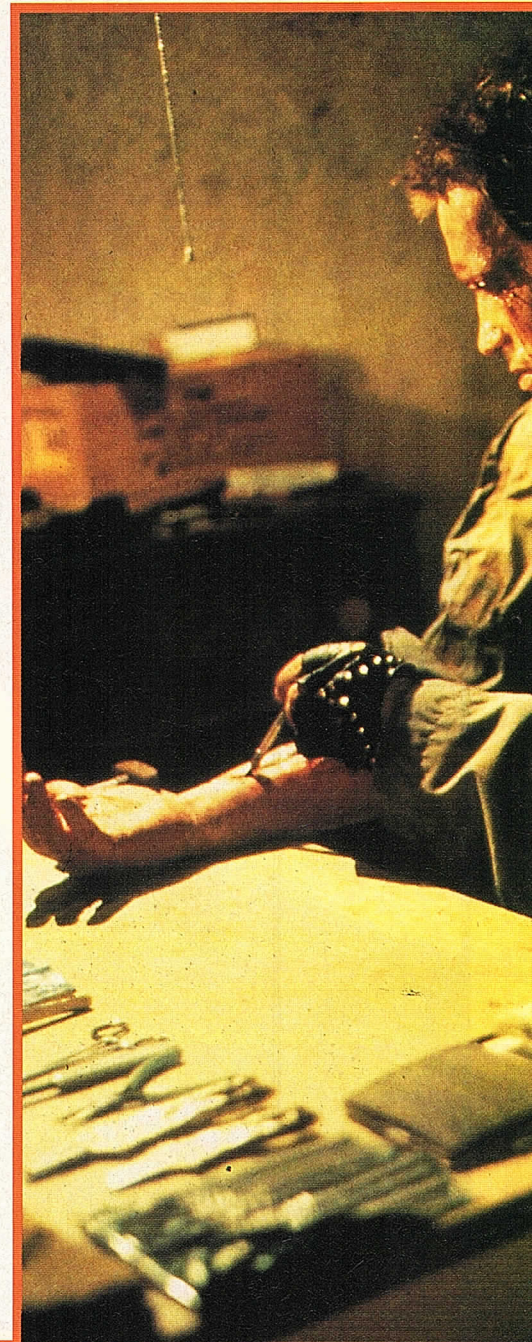
The muscular one's recent hits had included the tiresome *Conan* films which had firmly established him as super-hero. With this in mind director James Cameron wanted to leave his audience in no doubt that Arnie had definitely turned bad guy. One of the first scenes had Arnie gun down an innocent housewife, as he checks off the telephone directory, systematically picking off anyone unfortunate enough to share the same name as his intended victim who will later give birth to the said sprog. Leaving aside suggestions of a religious parallel Cameron's blisteringly paced sci-fi thriller

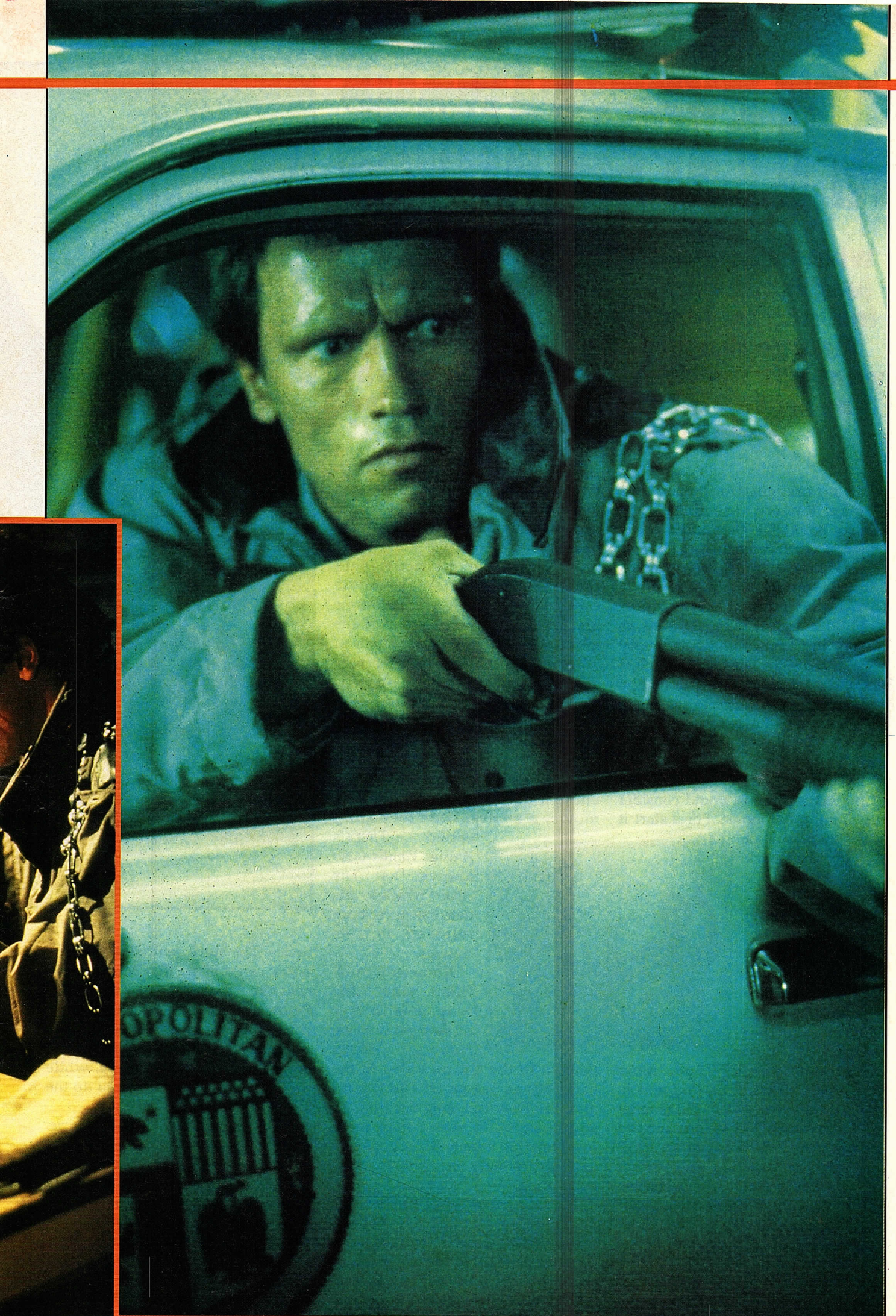
was a remarkable directorial debut and though made relatively cheaply it went on to be one of the smashes of 1984. This was thanks in no small part to the presence of Arnie's genuinely frightening humanoid killer, and his ability to out-ham Rambo, delivering his one-liners with a wit and irony that Sly can only dream about.

After introducing himself to the aforementioned housewife in the way only he can, Arnie hunts out the next potential victim on his list. But the man of few words is not to have it all his own way as another future warrior arrives on the scene, a hardened guerrilla fighter by the name of Reese sent to terminate The Terminator thus ensuring the safe arrival of the future hero. Contemporary Los Angeles is turned into a war zone, with man pitted against man-machine. After some brilliant set-pieces and a genuinely scary end chase in which our heroine is stalked by the remnants of Arnie's cyborg, the whole time-twisting affair is explained in all its complexity. Naturally the course of time is not interfered with thus ensuring a nice happy ending.

The Terminator's runaway success triggered off a whole genre, though Arnie quickly moved onto pastures new and modified his robotic persona into other, more human but no less impressive figures. Leaping from a plane and getting to his feet unharmed in *Commando* and dodging bullets and alien assault in *Raw Deal* and *Predator* respectively, the big man really does give the impression that he was actually built as opposed to born. The giveaway is that most cyborgs are rather more articulate.

Keith Jeffries



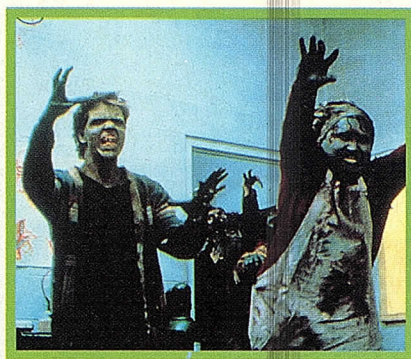


APE EXPECTATIONS

When it comes to horror movies it's a jungle out there and one who's never inclined to monkey about is gore guru George Romero. Matthew Hopkins went ape over the career of a man who has proved time and time again to be made of the fright stuff...

It's no exaggeration to say that George Romero's seminal 1968 classic *Night Of The Living Dead* changed the face of modern horror cinema. Bronx-born Romero was 28 when he started shooting the movie (for the ridiculously low sum of \$150,000) and it was planned as nothing more than a cheap and nasty slice of drive-in fodder. As such it definitely delivered the goods and by the time audiences got to the film's bleak, sledgehammer punch of an ending they knew they had seen something special.

It was hardly surprising that none of the major studios would consider distributing the movie. For a start it wasn't in colour – a definite drawback for the TV generation. Columbia turned it down for that reason, while AIP said they would love to release it – if George would only change that ending into



something sweeter and more romantic. 'No way!' he said and in the end the picture went the familiar drive-in route, playing second feature to *Dr Who And The Daleks* (!) Ironically it was this billing that rescued *Living Dead* from oblivion, when an article in *The Reader's Digest* pointed out that one of the sickest horror flicks of all time was playing alongside a kiddie pic.

The publicity generated by this article made many people seek out

Romero's movie to see if it was as black as it was painted. They were not disappointed and fairly soon the healthy box-office takings encouraged the distributors to release it to the midnight movie circuit, where it made a small fortune and went on to become one of the most successful independent films of all time. This should have been very good news for Romero and his fellow investors, but as often happens in the movie business, they got ripped off. After various 'expenses' had been deducted by the film's distributors, they barely got enough back to finance a second movie, a modest little love story

called *There's Always Vanilla* (also known as *The Affair*) which to this date has never been released in this country.

Romero's next film was the equally disappointing *Hungry Wives*

(shown in the UK on video in the early 80s as *Season Of The Witch* - after the Donovan song used on the soundtrack). It was a massively overlong (130 minutes) black comedy and surprisingly was poorly made and boring.

By this time genre buffs were beginning to think George Romero was a one-hit wonder. But then came *The Crazies* (1973) which was not entirely successful, but did at least take gory George back to *Living Dead*



basics. The story centred around an Army cargo plane that crash-landed near the small town of Evans City, Pennsylvania, infecting the locals with mass homicidal mania. A group of people not yet affected by the madness struggle to escape, while that military move in to clean up the mess with bomb and bullet.

Also known as *Code Name: Trixie*, *The Crazies* was only a modest success but in the meantime *Night Of The Living Dead* was still drawing in audiences everywhere, particularly in Europe, where the film had by now gained a huge cult following. One of its biggest fans was Italian horror expert Dario (Suspiria) Argento, who in the early part of